

For immediate release

Hog farms left to ensure water protection

Government ignores key elements of Walkerton Report Passes Nutrient Management Act (a.k.a. farm manure)

The Ontario government passed the Nutrient Management Act Wednesday without ensuring that key recommendations of the Walkerton report were included in the Bill. Justice O'Connor of the Walkerton Inquiry recommended that the Ministry of Environment be the lead agency to design and approve nutrient management plans for intensive livestock operations in order to protect water sources. The new Bill ignores this advice and delegates to the private sector the review and approval of manure and commercial fertilizer spreading plans. These "self certified plans" would supercede local by-laws that impose higher standards to protect watersheds and land.

"While all would welcome legislation to control manure, Justice O'Connor was clear that watershed protection plans should be in place first before granting private water users such as large hog farms a blank check to design and approve their own nutrient management plans", says Christine Elwell, Senior Legal Analyst, for the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy.

"The intent of this Act is to delegate important governance functions directly to factory farms, bypassing the Ministry of Environment and higher local standards contained in municipal by laws that reflect local concerns and objectives", continued Elwell.

The tragedy in Walkerton Ontario began with the spreading of manure near a water well that was contaminated with the bacteria E.coli which can thrive in the gut and intestines of cattle and hogs, and survive in the environment for extended periods of time. This bacteria may be transmitted to humans through drinking water. Seven people died, and more than 2,300 became ill at Walkerton in 2000. Some people, particularly children, may endure lasting effects.

For more information contact:

Christine Elwell,
Senior Legal and Policy Analyst,
416-923-3529, ext. 25

For a full review of the Act, [please look at CIELAP's 6th Annual Report on Ontario's](#)

Environment.

The Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy has for been commenting on and monitoring policy and regulatory changes related to the environment for 30 years.